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Message of
the Executive
August
1865

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of Oregon

Gentlemen

The principal cause of the adjournment of this body, from July last- was to place before the people the Original Organic Law, together with the amended Organic Law, that they might decide which should be the foundation for a Code of Laws, to govern us until such time as the United States of America extend their jurisdiction over us - I now have the honor to inform you that the Organic Law, as amended by your Honorable Body, has been adopted by the Citizens of this Territory, and it therefore devolves on you to revise, alter, and amend the Laws, heretofore passed, that they may accord with the Organic Law; and to frame such other Laws as in your wisdom may be deemed necessary, for the safety and protection of the people.- The past year has proved, that the revenue is insufficient to meet the expenses of the Government, and while I would recommend that strict economy should guide the Legislature in their appropriations - I would also recommend as one means of increasing the revenue that improved farms be taxed in proportion to the value of the improvements; at present the farmer who depends principally on his stock, as a means of subsistance, is taxed, while the producer, pays nothing into the Treasury - there is no doubt but this tax will be paid cheerfully by the farmers if the appropriations are made for the general welfare of the

community, perhaps this may be found sufficient to meet the expenses without increasing the per centage —

The Executive Committee at the opening of the Session last July in their Message to your Honorable Body earnestly recommended "that the law requiring two Sessions of the "Court to be held in each County "be so amended as to require only two or at "most three Sessions during the year in the "whole Colony." ~~Two Sessions during a year would probably be sufficient as the Grand Jury could be empanelled from the four Counties and the business executed if necessary~~

You can carefully examine this matter and and make such alterations in the Judiciary Department as will facilitate the operations of the Court and economise the expenses —

There will be a great deal of Litigation in this Country arising from the facilities of obtaining credit which prevails throughout the Colony; in order to prevent this in some measure, I would recommend the passage of a Law which would, prevent all debts, (except where fraud is alleged) or Notes taken for debts, contracted after the passage of such Law, from being collected by Judicial process, this would save much time and trouble to the Court; persons would be more careful in disposing of their property, and those who came under obligations to others in my opinion would be more punctual in their payments, Knowing if they did not meet their obligations when they became due, they would receive no more favors; allowances

would be made for a man who should meet with misfortune, but the man who was able to pay and would not, by the passage of such a Law would soon become known through the Colony —

I would recommend that the 4th Section of the Militia Law, by which the qualified voters of the several districts elect the Field Officers annually, be so amended, as that the Field Officers be elected by the Company Officers of the Regiment which he is to command, or be attached to; the Senior Officer in the Regiment to preside at the election, and make the returns to the Commander in Chief — Officers to hold their Commissions, until their resignations are accepted; unless expelled by a Court Martial for misdemeanors — Also that the 6th Section be so amended that instead of the Militia being ordered out for Martial exercise two days in each year, one day only be required, principally for inspection — And that the 8th Section be amended so as to make it the duty of every man to appear on the ground armed and equipped, this last amendment is very necessary surrounded as we are by savage tribes, every man in the Colony should be provided with the means of defence —

Should you amend the above Sections it will be necessary to amend the other Sections to make them correspond — Experience has fully proved that two or three days spent in martial exercises every year are insufficient for instruction in Military manoeuvres Consequently

any time spent more than is requisite for inspection would be a heavy and unnecessary tax on the citizens of Oregon — Officers drills should be increased — and as an inducement to Officers to drill often, and be punctual, it would be well to limit their term of service to six years after which time they should be exempt from military duty except in case of an invasion.—

~~Indeed~~ There is nothing that more surely advances the prosperity of any Country than numerous School houses well filled during the week days, and a strict observance of the Sabbath — I would recommend that School districts be formed and the means of education be placed within the reach of every family — the inhabitants residing within the bounds of a School District should be required to meet, select a site for a School House, and build one at the expense of the District, the cost to each individual would be but trifling, teachers would soon be found to occupy the Houses and dispense the blessings of education to the children around them — ☤ Our late information from the United States leaves the question of the boundary line between the United States and Great Britain still undecided, the question was agitated during the last Congress and we have every reason to believe judging from the Inaugural address of President Polk and the disposition prevailing in the United States with regard to this Country that the jurisdiction of the United States will be speedily extended over us —

Through the mercy and goodness of the
Divine Being we are blessed again with
a plentiful harvest - Agriculture the
first and most important occupation of
man has abundantly repaid the labors
of the husbandman - Health dwells in
our land, and Peace surrounds us -
May we show our gratitude to him
who bestows all these mercies by bearing
in mind through all our acts that
we are dependant on him, and may
our prayers continually ascend to him
for wisdom to guide us in the important
duties to which we are called

Geo. Abernethy

Oregon City 5 August 1845